

EP.09.04

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PROPOSAL TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL: Revision to the BSLAS: Astronomy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

SPONSOR: Associate Professor Brian D. Fields, Curriculum Committee Chair, Department of Astronomy, 333-5529, bdfields@astro.uiuc.edu

COLLEGE SPONSOR: Associate Dean Ann M. Mester, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 3-1350, mester@uiuc.edu

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: We are proposing two significant changes to the Astronomy major:

1. ASTR 100/121/122 are no longer valid for a major. Students will be required to take ASTR 210 to fulfill the Elementary Astronomy portion of the major.
2. Astronomy majors are now required to complete 3 of the 4 "cafeteria classes" at the 400-level (404, 405, 406, 414) which comprise an advanced survey of modern astronomy. Majors must also complete an additional 12 hours of advanced (300-level+) Astronomy classes (with adviser approval, other advanced technical classes, e.g. Physics/Chemistry, may be substituted).

JUSTIFICATION:

1. ASTR 100/121/122 are intended for non-physical science majors. For example, Physics majors must take PHYS 211/212, not PHYS 101/102.
2. Under the current major, students must complete 18 hours of advanced ASTR and/or PHYS classes, of which at least 10 hours must be ASTR classes. This allows students to complete an astronomy major while only completing a single 400-level Astronomy class, potentially bypassing the advanced survey of modern astronomy courses (ASTR 404/405/406/414). This situation arose out of the course re-numbering several years ago, when some previously 200-level courses were promoted to 300-level. The new requirements will ensure that all Astronomy majors have a strong base of astronomical knowledge at the advanced level, while preserving the traditional flexibility the Astronomy major has had for students in related physical science majors (e.g. Physics, Chemistry, etc..) to easily integrate an Astronomy double major into their studies.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:

a), b) and c) None. Astronomy 210 is offered every semester, so Astronomy majors have tremendous flexibility in taking the class. In addition, the advanced survey classes (ASTR 404/405/406/414) are already offered on a 4-semester rotating basis. In fact, these classes are popular with many non-majors. Finally, the total hours for an

Astronomy major has not significantly changed. So, we do not anticipate a tremendous upswing in class sizes requiring additional course offerings.

d) No additional library acquisitions will be required.

e) No additional support services will be required.

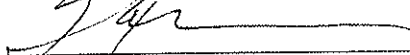
GUIDELINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION:

- ASTR 401 provides development of writing skills with emphasis on developing adequate and critical coverage of a topic, brevity compatible with clarity, and effective presentation.
- A major focus in all our department's course offerings is how our understanding of the Universe has come about and the scientific evidence that supports our current best theories.

CLEARANCES:



Curriculum Committee Chair, Department of Astronomy



Chair, Department of Astronomy



College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Chair, Senate Educational Policy Committee

EFFECTIVE DATE: upon approval